

THE CAVE OF AVARICE.

BY CLINTON ROSS.

(Copyright, 1898, by Clinton Ross.)

How I came to Corpus Christi in Sonora, I need not tell; and I am glad I need not, for it is at the best a shameful story. Yet there I fancied I could put my past away. I was sure those I had wronged would not follow so far; and I felt safe—if a man can be safe from his memories. For memories now and then would come, would bother; then I longed for money with which to make restitution with a hurried desire. For what I had left was but a pittance, to keep me for many years in this simple Mexican village. I had lost most that I had stolen in many ventures, taken in the vain hope.

Have you ever been in Mexico? Can you imagine that village far away over the border—its long sunny street, its towers the adobe houses, its simple folk, with more of the Indian than Spaniard. High above on both sides was the street scattered slopes of the mountains, and a quarter of a mile to the valley on the right, stood the old monastery of Corpus Christi, built, it was said, by a generation that had known Montezuma. Perhaps the monks did these few brown-cowled brothers, the survivors of the great order. As I sat idly smoking, I wondered at them, thinking how much older a monastery might have been for me.

I myself did not make the acquaintance of the monks. The villagers sometimes chatted with me, I knew all the affairs of my fat landlady and her black-eyed daughter, about whom three young fellows were passionate. These folk had been curious when I had appeared on donkey back over the slope. But habit stifles curiosity, and I lived on almost the sole guest of the old inn. For the mountain village was out of the way of travel; centuries had passed since it had been a station on the route to the now long-abandoned



THEY DISCOVER THE TREASURE.

silver mines of the mountains. And days and months passed, and yet they will in such an out-of-the-way place, where the events and talk of the world seem of no moment; and, as I say, I longed for money, with a desire for all I had frittered away—honor and position and love I had lost in the New England town, where the visitors might be curious when I had appeared on donkey back over the slope. But habit stifles curiosity, and I lived on almost the sole guest of the old inn. For the mountain village was out of the way of travel; centuries had passed since it had been a station on the route to the now long-abandoned

I had been at Corpus Christi a year before the two who were to be my comrades appeared. One I knew him, as John Fenton, was a little clerkly, bookish man with a certain fright always in his sunken eyes; yet plainly a man of gentle breeding, and the other, who called himself Dorden, was an anti-social, a burly, red-faced, oath-dropping brute. What interests I wondered, did they have in common, and the sunnier dare ask them of their past, of their kind of money, but where the old habit of mine, possibly they had the same reason, for they never inquired of me, and we belonged somewhere over the border. Isolation, and the same conditions of post, made strange companionship. In desperation among these simple village folk I struck up a friendship with Dorden. Many a sunny day was passed in the shaded court of the inn, playing gloomily with a greasy pack Dorden had. On one thing we agreed: we wanted money; that alone would repair the cloak of respectability we had worn threadbare.

As we talked little Fenton would smile gloomily, and would disappear up the slope to the monastery. For he strangely had made an acquaintance there, and every day he would return with a pile of old manuscripts, a library of the place, records—forgotten by scholars—of the early history of Sonora. Then Dorden let drop the insignificant remark he ever heard of the monks of either; Fenton was a scholar, a linguist, who had been a tutor at a New England college. Again I wondered what had brought together these two, so dissimilar.

One evening—ah, I never may forget it—we were sitting by flickering candles in my room, Dorden and I, at our gaming, and Fenton reading a manuscript he had brought that day from the monastery. The monks, an illiterate lot, did not care, or note, their treasures of the time when Sonora was great, and their venturesome gentlemen were about these far mountains—seeking gold and its power. Possibly these brothers of Corpus Christi would know this pale, little-faced man who amused his exile with papers that to them had no value; for, as I have said, scholarship had died in that cloister.

"If it were so," said Fenton, looking at us suddenly.

"What, what's that, Bob?" said Dorden.

"That Miguel Santos left his treasures in the mountains back from Corpus Christi."

"H—," said Dorden, "stop your—lingo. No such luck."

"Listen," said the little man, whose past I say I wondered at, and he resumed.

"In those days the governor ruled Sonora not so much as Miguel Santos. Nay, Santos had tribute of the governor, and of all who passed; and Miguel Santos' wealth was great beyond imagination. Yet every piece of gold, they say, was blood stained."

"There are others," said Dorden, dealing the cards.

"Listen," said the other rather eagerly.

"But in his old age remorse seized Santos, and he threw into the mountains every respect a manly life—save in the simple one, that he made no restitution. To this day the treasure is hid in the mountains—wealth greater than all the king of Spain ever had from Peru."

"H—," said Dorden, "I wish I'd it. Something, Bob, to know as much as you about languages."

to the silver mine thou wilt come about five Spanish miles to a projecting rock, going to the western side of the rock, place due west 25 yards, which will bring thee against the clump of bushes by the cliffside. Under these thou wilt find the opening of the cave. Push the upper hand corner of the iron door and it will swing open, and thou wilt be cured as was Miguel Santos."

"It's gospel truth, then," said Dorden.

"That he was cured?" said Fenton, starting.

"Damn the curse," Dorden replied; "that the treasure is there."

"Yes, it may be there," said Fenton, rising.

"But the old road the fellow speaks of?" Dorden said, "Haven't you read of it in 'em papers?"

"It is the path to the left of the monastery," said Fenton.

"We'll go there at sunrise, then," said Dorden, rising. "We'll divide."

"If it's true," said I.

"It's got to be true," Dorden retorted.

"Read it—For God's sake, read it! Can you?"

"My luck has got to change some time," Fenton said there, the sweat pouring from his pale face.

"You poor, limp fool," Dorden said, contemptuously. "Now, the first thing is for us to go to bed."

He seemed to direct us like a captain, and we readily allowed him the leadership. Yet I fancied something dangerous in his eyes, and I remember that after I was in bed I arose and bolted my door. What if the dream were not a dream? Ay, what if we should find the treasure? And then my dream saddened me, and I tossed till the sun came over the mountain top—the mountain, perhaps, of the cave of the river.

We started out after breakfast, stealthily, as if we were on some thievish errand. The manner of thieves seemed to fall to us easily.

At first the search promised well, for the old road by the monastery was a marvelous piece of engineering for its day and time. Nay, so far as Mexico after all the years, had not destroyed man's work. So anxiously we followed that splendid and forgotten way, which reminded us of a road as much as of an old Roman road, such as you may see along the Mediterranean or the Adriatic. Countless treasures perhaps had been dropped over it in the old days before the mine to which it led had been abandoned. Yes, it told of old interests, old passions. On we went doggedly, through the thick growth, no one of us with a word, mutely following Dorden's lead.

Two hours must have passed—the growth made it tediously slow—when at last we saw the high projecting rock. Yes, the rock then existed! My heart beat up, and I knew how my companions felt from the palp even Dorden displayed. From the western side, at the center of the rock's base, he began to pace.

"One, two,"

Fenton and I followed. Yes, there was the sheer face of the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

edge. Fenton and I struggled to hold him back. In some way—God knows how—I disentangled myself and turned just at the edge. My companions were there, but the danger was a little less, while a voice cried out, in hoarse despair—it indeed may have been my imagination, and yet, indeed, it may have been the truth.

"Curse! Curse!" came that fearsome cry. Fearsome, I say, for I was fleeing. I was across the narrow pass, and as I reached the firmer earth I heard a great crunching and crumbling behind. Awed even in my fear, I looked about. The air seemed to be filled with flying coins and jewels, sending out yellow and red, blue and green flashes, and then the earth gave way, that great crack sank, and a moment—yes, it might have been a moment, but it seemed to be a tediously horrible day—there came a mighty splash, and a spray struck my face, level with my eyes, and I saw the surface of that great river which begins and ends in the bowels of the earth. Its bottom at this point you may find, should you care to descend, with old Spanish coins and jewels, and perhaps with the bones of men. Yet most of that great wealth may have been lost to the world, for the current of the river far out under the earth, which gives and takes our riches, as she gives and takes our bodies. As for me, I had then no desire to search, nor have I now. Then I turned and ran out of that accursed cave of avarice.

Outside, the warm Mexican sun beat on me. But I did not dare to return to Corpus Christi. I turned down the other side of the mountain, thinking of the secret of Miguel Santos, and those of my two late companions—God help them! For me in the few years left there is penance for my past, and so I have come back into the New England town where my crime was done. As for the riches of the cave of avarice, I would not touch them, even for the comfort of restitution to those I robbed. The secret of Miguel Santos shall end with me, for the way to the cave is not as I have described it, even should you chance in the village of Corpus Christi, in the state of Sonora.

"We'll go there at sunrise, then," said Dorden, rising. "We'll divide."

"If it's true," said I.

"It's got to be true," Dorden retorted.

"Read it—For God's sake, read it! Can you?"

"My luck has got to change some time," Fenton said there, the sweat pouring from his pale face.

"You poor, limp fool," Dorden said, contemptuously. "Now, the first thing is for us to go to bed."

He seemed to direct us like a captain, and we readily allowed him the leadership. Yet I fancied something dangerous in his eyes, and I remember that after I was in bed I arose and bolted my door. What if the dream were not a dream? Ay, what if we should find the treasure? And then my dream saddened me, and I tossed till the sun came over the mountain top—the mountain, perhaps, of the cave of the river.

We started out after breakfast, stealthily, as if we were on some thievish errand. The manner of thieves seemed to fall to us easily.

At first the search promised well, for the old road by the monastery was a marvelous piece of engineering for its day and time. Nay, so far as Mexico after all the years, had not destroyed man's work. So anxiously we followed that splendid and forgotten way, which reminded us of a road as much as of an old Roman road, such as you may see along the Mediterranean or the Adriatic. Countless treasures perhaps had been dropped over it in the old days before the mine to which it led had been abandoned. Yes, it told of old interests, old passions. On we went doggedly, through the thick growth, no one of us with a word, mutely following Dorden's lead.

Two hours must have passed—the growth made it tediously slow—when at last we saw the high projecting rock. Yes, the rock then existed! My heart beat up, and I knew how my companions felt from the palp even Dorden displayed. From the western side, at the center of the rock's base, he began to pace.

"One, two,"

Fenton and I followed. Yes, there was the sheer face of the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden persisted, and again we were favored, for we came directly, with scarcely an error, on the opening.

Had brought a machete, and now proceeded to cut the bushes away, and then we heard a low, distant rumble, as of subdued thunder.

"The river," Fenton cried at this repeated evidence. But what we saw was more encouraging. For the cave stopped at about 20 feet. It was walled by masonry, hewn covered, a hundred winged creatures were on the surface. But here was indeed, what Miguel Santos, dead a full century and a half, had promised; and there was the entrance, crusted and discolored, so that we wondered if, indeed, it would answer to the pressure on the upper left hand corner, wondered if it all the years the treasure had not been taken. Again it was Dorden making the trial, while we stood waiting. The road to riches—the cave of Santos' avarice—seemed easy indeed.

The air that swept our faces was singularly fresh and sweet, due to the waters that ran down the cliff, and the thick trees and bushes at its foot. We stumbled on over the layers of rotting trunks and leaves. A snake, so Dorden declared, ran out before him, yet Dorden